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DE RUEHEK #1144/01 3151030
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1512
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2747
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1110
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3138
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2524
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001144

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN: KARAKOL MAYOR PRAISES INTERNATIONAL
ASSISTANCE

REF: A. BISHKEK 1094
[1](#)B. BISHKEK 1124
[1](#)C. BISHKEK 1134

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: The mayor of Karakol, capital of Issyk Kul oblast, praised NGO and international assistance projects to the Ambassador October 23, but also identified infrastructural shortcomings, particularly in the transportation sector, which challenge the region's aim to develop its tourism potential. While he somewhat grudgingly praised certain aspects of China's economy, he was wary of too much influence and links with Issyk Kul oblast's eastern neighbor. End summary.

Praising International Assistance

[1](#)2. (U) During an October 23 lunch with the Ambassador, Karakol mayor Nurbek Aaliyev highlighted the city's "international" character and praised the work of non-governmental organizations and international assistance programs such as the Urban Institute, Save the Children, USAID and others in helping the city. He also mentioned an Asian Development Bank project which would treat waste water from Karakol. Aaliyev seemed interested in building a sister city relationship with a community in the United States.

Economic Challenges and Opportunities

[1](#)3. (U) Aaliyev repeated the desire, as expressed by the Ambassador's other interlocutors during her trip through Issyk Kul oblast (reftels), of improving the capacity for tourism in the region. However, he confirmed that regional power cuts were affecting economic conditions, and added that Issyk Kul officials would soon be traveling to the Toktogul hydroelectric cascade (several hundred miles west of Karakol) to learn about the electricity generation problems there. (Note: The Toktogul cascade and the main Bishkek power

station supply the oblast with electricity. End note.)
Aaliyev also identified food processing as a sector which
could take advantage of the oblast's agricultural production.

¶4. (U) Aaliyev highlighted two transportation shortfalls
that limit the oblast's tourism potential: 1) lack of an
airport near Karakol (capital of Issyk Kul oblast), and 2)
unrealized plans to cut travel time from Almaty (Kazakhstan)
to the Issyk Kul region in half through the construction of a
shorter highway. However, he said \$5 million had already
been spent on the road project.

Eyes on China

¶5. (SBU) In response to the Ambassador's question about
links to China, which borders Issyk Kul oblast, Aaliyev said
that a direct road link "would permit too many Chinese"
access to the region. "They would marry our women and then
never leave," he fretted. However, he somewhat grudgingly
praised the Chinese work ethic and agricultural methods and
seemed to support Chinese investment in the Sary Jazz region.

(Note: The Sary Jazz region in the far east of Issyk Kul
oblast has been identified as a future site for major
hydroelectric stations. End note.) Aaliyev concluded that
"we have much to learn from the Chinese."

Comment

¶6. (SBU) Aaliyev is a relatively young (new) mayor, who
welcomed international engagement and seems open to further

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interaction with the Embassy. Karakol and the greater Issyk
Kul region have potential for further tourism development,
but global financial conditions may limit available funding.
GFOELLER